

Conversion and Religious Divisions

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forced. So while his troops were still assisting the Byzantines during the summer of 989, he besieged and captured the Greek city of Chersonesus on the western Crimean coast about three miles south of modern Sevastopol, after which he sent envoys to Constantinople with the warning that if the princess were not sent to meet him he would attack the capital. Basil and Constantine were thus induced to carry out their share of the contract, and Anna departed tearfully with a numerous suite for Chersonesus, where Vladimir's baptism and his marriage were duly solemnized.

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After restoring Chersonesus to the Greeks, Vladimir returned to Kiev accompanied by the priests in Anna's entourage, and there proceeded to convert his subjects with the same forthright energy he showed in other crises. He caused the local idols to be overthrown, and the local population was subjected to wholesale baptism in the Dnieper river which flows past the city. As conversion progressed, the principate was divided into eight eparchies, each under a bishop. During the next century, however, Christianity spread rather slowly, as is indicated by outbreaks of paganism fifty and even eighty years later under the leadership of local shamans.

The conversion of the masses was to some extent accelerated by a facile syncretism which assimilated the figures of Christian belief to the chief dieties of the rudimentary pagan Slavic cult. Perun the thunderer was identified with the prophet Elijah in his chariot of fire, and it was also an easy step from belief in Svarog, the god of fire, and in his son Dazhbog, the life-giving solar orb, to an elementary conception of Almighty God the Father and the Son, the light of the world and of truth. The pagan Slavs' conceptions of an omnipotent multitude of benign or hostile supernatural beings were satisfied by the Christian notions of the Virgin, of saints, and of devils. Conversion also provided the upper classes with a general basic philosophy or *Weltanschauung* and with abundant ritual answers to their common human speculations. It likewise endowed them with an ideal of conduct which, though hardly

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175* attained by every individual, nevertheless produced some ad-
797 mirable characters among early medieval churchmen and lay-
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175* The sources from which Vladimir drew his clergy present a
793 problem of some importance and complexity. Adequate evi-
177 dence exists that Greek priests were sent to Russia both in the
period of the princess Anna and after her marriage to Vladimir.
Since there were isolated Christians and at least one church at
Kiev prior to Vladimir's conversion, there must have been a
small nucleus of Russian-speaking clergy in the city itself
before 989, though these clerics were probably of Greek na-
tionality. Vladimir's well-attested activity in wholesale conver-
sion even among the masses at widely separated points makes
it likely, however, that some provision was made for evangeliz-
ing the people in a language comprehensible to them. Priests
with the appropriate linguistic qualifications could be found at
this period only among members of the Byzantine clergy who
had been active in Bulgaria or among the Bulgarian clergy
themselves, since the differentiation between the spoken lan-
guages of Bulgaria and south Russia in the late tenth century
was so slight as to constitute no barrier to common understand-
ing.

175* The tradition of vernacular religious culture under Greek
779 intellectual auspices had been established in Bulgaria during
the reigns of Boris (852-889) and Simeon (894-927). In the
light of the eventual transmission to Kiev of a large body of
ecclesiastical literature in Old Bulgarian translations, it is an
accepted and doubtless correct convention of Russian literary
history in the pre-Tartar period to assume that these works
were first transmitted to Kievan Russia through the medium
of Byzantium as priests were sent out into the Russian field.
But, curiously enough, there are no historical data behind this
respectable hypothesis, nor does any explicit evidence point to
the slightest direct contact between the charges of Bulgaria
and Russia during the principates of Vladimir and of his son
through 1045.

The World of the Slavs

181 Russia knew nothing of Feudalism. She remained aloof from
 829 the intellectual current which began with Scholasticism and
 177 ended with scientific investigation. She was untouched by the Reformation. Whenever she entered into conflict with the Holy See, it was simply as a foreign power.

In short, Russia did not belong to the European family. If she was connected with it, said Danilevsky, it was by adoption, in the manner of a wild stock, on which an exotic branch has been grafted.

181 But had not religion, at least, engendered a spiritual solidarity
 829 between her and the West? Was not Orthodoxy a disruption of
 • 771 the Christian community and had not six centuries of Ecumenism forged indissoluble bonds between the Germano-Roman and the Slavo-Greek worlds?

No, replied Danilevsky. The Western Church was the triumph of Rationalism, differentiated by a positive sign among the Catholics, a negative one among the Protestants. Rome sacrificed internal to external unity, the Reformation sacrificed true liberty to the idea of external liberty. The Eastern Church was neither a system nor a hardened doctrine; it was all love and renunciation. Much more than dogmatic opposition was involved—these were two concepts of the spiritual life which were poles apart. That explained why the Orthodox Christians had come to regard Islam as the involuntary and unwitting saviour of Slavism. By tolerating independent churches under her sway, Islam protected them against the assimilating or unifying ascendancy of Latin Catholicism. A Patriarch of Constantinople had said that *Providence had chosen the Osmanlis to defend Orthodoxy against the Western heresy.*

186* So that Russia, according to Danilevsky, saw in Europe
 829 nothing to give her a feeling of historical or spiritual solidarity. Such was, moreover, the point of view of the great Russian novelist, Dostoievsky; to show oneself a true Russian was, for him, *to place oneself on the battleground of all European hostilities.* It was to constitute a unity, not in Europe, but opposed to it.

The thesis of the biologist met that of the novelist. A harmful policy (said Danilevsky in his turn), during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, associated Russia with the European balance of power. Now this balance of power affected only the

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648 getting them to attend the Slavonic Press Congress which was held during the summer in Belgrade. A characteristic incident spoiled the atmosphere of this gathering. The Poles agreed to attend the banquet offered to the members of the Congress only on condition that the Imperial hymn, *Boje Tsaria Khranyi*, should not be played. In an attempt to conciliate all parties, it was agreed not to play either the Russian or the Polish hymn, but to replace them with the Panslav hymn, *Ei Sloveni*. But no one had thought of the fact that this is sung to the same tune as that of Dabrowsky's hymn, *Jeszcze Polska nie zginela* ('Poland is not lost'). Hence an altercation between Poles and Russians, with the result that the latter refused to take part in the proposed outing to the Iron Gates.

It was jokingly said in Belgrade that the Poles were first and foremost Poles, then Catholics, and Slavs when they had time. Yet Bethmann-Hollweg, as President of the Prussian Council in 1912, had, by his famous Expropriation Law, reawakened among the Poles the feeling of a community of destiny with the Slavs. In the Prussian Landtag Korfanty exclaimed, 'At a time when, in the Balkans, the cannon is thundering for the liberation of the Slavs, we Poles, Slavs in Prussia, are the victims of a fresh act of vile oppression and persecution'.

But the Russians did not wish, or did not know how to profit by these divisions. The idea of easing the situation came to them too late; at the time of the First World War, after Pilsudski had organised the 'legions' in Krakow, and the P.O.W. (*Polska organizacja wojskowa*), the Polish secret organisation in Russia; it was only then that Grand-Duke Nicholas proclaimed the hypothetical independence of Poland.

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• 771 The first Russian Slavophiles' die-hard attitude in matters of religion greatly contributed to disturbing the currents of sympathy between Muscovites and the Slavs of Central Europe. Yet denominational differences were not calculated to alarm the Czechs. In 1848, the populace of Prague crammed Wenceslas Square to hear the Serbian Archpriest, Stamatovich, sing the office of the Orthodox rite; a wave of emotion passed through them when the celebrant intoned the *Gospodi pomiluj* for the repose of the soul of John Hus and of Zizka, the hero of the Hussite Tabor. The fact was that the Serbs, not very much given to mysticism, saw the faith chiefly as a counterpart of

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national sentiment. It is not irrelevant to mention that the Orthodox Slavs of the Balkans are the least practising of Orthodox Christians, among whom it is the Serbs who have the largest number of unbelievers. It is said that, for a given number of inhabitants, there would be six times as many churches in Greece as in Serbia, four times as many in Rumania, and twice as many in Bulgaria.

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Muscovite Slavism differed from Czech Slavism not only in its internal tendencies but in its psychological structure. The patient mysticism of the Russians aimed at achievements on the basis of a millenary evolution. The Czechs, of less nebulous mentality and of intense volitional power, sought immediate results. In Moscow they talked of the divine mission of Eastern Christianity; in Prague, of the boycotting of German goods and the disposal of the products of Czech industry. Between two nations with such a differing mental outlook, it was difficult to maintain concomitant moral action for very long.

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The breach became apparent when the Czech, Karel Kramár, created the 'Neo-Slavism' which held its first Assembly in Prague in May, 1908. A Pole, Roman Dnowski, and a Bulgarian, Stevan Bobtchev, were in agreement with him to rejuvenate the old Slavonic ideal under a new climate. It was a doctrine tending towards cultural unity and the spiritual and economic collaboration of all Slavs, without distinction of religion, and on a footing of perfect equality. An anti-hegemonic conception of Slav solidarity thus replaced 'Russo-Orthodox-Panslavism', relegated to the order of romantic myths. It seemed to provide the positive basis and the practical aims which agreement among Slavs had always lacked.

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But, among the other Slav peoples, this movement did not meet with the success its founder anticipated. Too many of these peoples still had to contend with foreign domination. Kramár more or less approved the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Dual Monarchy. He saw in it the legalisation of a state of things which implied an increase in the number, and therefore in the influence, of the Slavs within Austria-Hungary; it was for the inverse reason that the German Liberals in Austria had, thirty years earlier (1878), unleashed furious opposition to the occupation of these same provinces. But bound up with this question were the security and the independence of the Serbian

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795 to do with the protesting prelates,¹¹ or openly dissociated themselves from their attitude.

- 771 By way of retort, the first number of the *Moscow Patriarchy*
626 published a message from the Council of Russian Bishops, assembled for the election, inviting Christians to pray for the victory
795 of the Red Army and the fulfilment of the scriptural text invoked by Alexander Nevsky: 'He who strikes with the sword shall perish by the sword'. On September 8, this same Council had excommunicated 'as adversaries of the Cross of the Lord, all who have been guilty of treason to the common cause of the Church and gone over to Fascism'; the bishops and clergy guilty on this head were removed from their sacred office.

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186* To conclude, the only obstacles to a general reconciliation
563 of the Slavonic peoples came from the Poles. To summarise here the vicissitudes of Soviet-Polish relations since the pact of December, 1941, would mean not only relating the most stormy chapter in the Allies' war diplomacy, but also recalling the relations of the various groups among the Polish exiles, the antagonism between the London Committee and that of Lublin, the frontier problem, and also the perhaps more tragic problem of the political, religious, and social concepts on the basis of which the Polish State was to be re-born. Once again it was made very clear that Poland occupied a place apart on the map of the Slavonic world, and formed an obstacle to the realisation of full Slav solidarity.

- 727 Like the other Slavonic States, however, she had been caught
177 up in the advance of the Russian armies sweeping across Eastern Europe—an onrush which settled the fate of the Slav nations, with or without their consent, as a consequence of their liberation. For three or four years Germany had been the second Slavonic power in the world. She had imposed on her Serbian, Croatian, Slovak, and Bulgarian satellites not only the horrors of the occupation, but also ideologies strongly opposed to their temperaments and their history; an impersonal and tyrannical idea of the State, a 'New Order' which was nothing but a hypocritical subjection, anti-Semitism which—with the exceptions of Poland and Imperial Russia—the Slavonic nations had always regarded with horror. When the collapse came, all these nations turned

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¹¹ Among these, however, we must include the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Argentine.

CHAPTER XI

ORTHODOXY AND THE PEOPLE

THERE is evidence that in Russia the year 1948 was marked 771 by widespread religious revival. It is striking and even startling. It tells of the people flocking back to their Church; of very great numbers crowding the churches of Moscow to make their communions during Lent; of physically exhausted priests snatching a few hours' sleep without leaving church, so many were the people who came to seek their ministrations.

Even if such reports exaggerated the facts and were only partly true, they draw attention once more to the ineradicably religious nature of the Russians. They suggest that it is to the temper of the Russian folk as a whole that the West must look for the prospect of peace and mutual understanding, and inspire the hope that in the long run the character of the Russian people will make itself felt and say its say.

In dealing with Orthodoxy we are dealing with a different 770 civilization from our own. It is, if we adopt Toynbee's classification, Byzantine whilst ours is Western, and although both are derived from the Greco-Roman civilization which preceded them, the two have their own characteristic and sometimes divergent views of life. It behoves us then to try to understand the Orthodox view of life, and what especially concerns us here is the mainspring of that view of life—for its mainspring is religion, even if that should manifest itself in negative form, as recently in Russia.

Leaving on one side then the official body of doctrine and 781 the questions which confront the hierarchy in their relations with the State and with those who lie outside the confines of Orthodoxy, what does religion mean when it means anything, to the people of the Orthodox Church, to the man behind

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781 kneels in front of him, removes his foot-gear first from one
 796 foot, then from the other, and washes and dries his feet. He
 replaces the socks and shoes and passes on to the next. When
 he comes to the one who represents St. Peter, the latter makes
 the protest recorded in St. John's Gospel and his reluctance
 has to be overborne before his feet are washed. Finally the
 officiant resumes his vestments and the main service continues
 its course. How long does all this take? It does not matter, no
 one minds or even notices how long. It is all done in absolute
 silence. All that is audible is the breathing of one's immediate
 neighbours among the tense crowd of worshippers.

781 Here too is something particularly real to the Orthodox
 spirit which is an echo of individual experience, or at least of
 individual aspiration constantly known. Humiliation may
 even be sought after from religious motives, and exceptionally
 this may take oddly extreme forms. The bizarre and well-
 nigh incredible figure whom the Russians call "Yurodivi",
 which may be translated the "Fool for Christ's sake"¹ could
 only be found within the Eastern Orthodox world. He may be
 really deficient mentally, and as such, in the Russian view,
 under the special protection of God. He may also be the man
 who in pursuit of humility and in praise of it deliberately
 assumed a character of foolishness, and courted the jeers of
 those he met, inviting their mockery as he roamed from
 village to village—a fantastic figure, but one who has his meed
 of reverence too, for the grace that he seeks is loved.

771 The Orthodox has more to remind him of the unseen world
 than those who dwell in lands in which religion assumes forms
 that are more austere. Though for centuries under Turkish
 rule he was deprived of such outward signs of religion, so that
 at times he was wont to build his church half buried in the
 ground to aid concealment, yet with the return of freedom he
 set up his shrines at street corners and along the wayside.
 Icons are not confined to the churches, they are to be found
 in the houses, in every room of a devout household. The
 living-room will have an icon in a position stereotyped by
 custom, and a visitor will salute it on entering as he greets his
 host. Especially in Russia of pre-revolution days, icons were

¹ See 1 Corinthians iv, 10.

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to be seen everywhere, at the railway stations, in the shops, in prisons and barracks and all sorts of public buildings. 771

A further reminder is provided by events in the yearly round marked by the Church Kalendar. This has perhaps a more intimate touch upon the lives of Orthodox people, so many of whom are peasants for whom the festivals of the Church are closely associated with the recurrent seasons in Nature and with agricultural work. 771 796

The Orthodox Kalendar is in its framework the same as the Western. That is to say it is built up around the Great Festivals which are common to the whole of Christendom, Easter being the chief of all. But there is no Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Whitsuntide is used by the Orthodox for the commemoration of All Saints. Thereafter the Sundays are counted after Whit Sunday. In the course of the year many of the Sundays are given names, e.g., the first Sunday after Easter is known as the Sunday of St. Thomas, and in general the names are derived from the Gospel appointed for the day. The first Sunday in Lent is Orthodox Sunday (see p. 54) when blessings are invoked upon the champions of Orthodoxy and anathemas upon its foes. There is no season of Advent. 796

Every day is marked as the commemoration of a saint, and sometimes of more than one. Here differences will be found in various parts of the Orthodox world owing to the introduction of the names of local saints, and the differences from the West are remarkable. The Orthodox Kalendar contains the names of most of the Old Testament Prophets and Patriarchs and almost none of the Western saints find a place in it. If it is compared with the English Kalendar it will be found that practically none of the minor saints belong to both Kalendars. An outstanding exception is St. George on April 23, who is highly venerated in the East as the Great Martyr.

The times of fasting prescribed by the Orthodox Church are more frequent than in any part of the West. In addition to Lent, which begins in the East on the Monday after Quinquagesima, and is known as the Great Lent, another fasting period is the first fortnight of August, another is the six weeks before Christmas, and there is still another of varying length 785 796

158 THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

793 is as it should be. If you have a bad one, that is much to be deplored. But a priest of some sort you must have, for otherwise there are no worship and no sacraments, and these are just where, most conspicuously, the other world breaks through.

• 771 As the Church, with its succession of festivals and fasts keeps touch with the yearly cycle of Nature, so it shepherds the individual human life from the cradle to the grave. The rites that attend his birth and his death stress the link between the two worlds, and the fact that man lives in both at the same time. Even his baptism is not the first occasion on which a child of Orthodox parents will be brought into contact with the Church of which he is to become a member. On the day following the birth the priest comes to say prayers over the mother and child, and again a week later when the child is given his name. On the fortieth day from its birth the mother brings the child to Church, when prayers are said for the child, and if baptism has meanwhile been administered the priest carries the child through the church and (in the case of a male child) into the Sanctuary, reciting the *Nunc Dimittis*. But unless the child has been baptized at home, which is not infrequently the case, the latter ceremony will follow baptism. And the prayers of the eighth day are now combined with those of the first day. The rite of baptism is preceded by exorcism and a short catechism of renunciation of Satan and acceptance of Christ, which concludes with the recitation of the Nicene Creed.

851 The administration of the Sacrament itself begins with a Litany said by the deacon while the priest prays secretly for himself and for the one about to be baptized. This is followed by a long prayer said aloud, in the course of which the water is blessed in words which at times recall the phraseology of the Anglican rite; e.g.,

"Grant that the person to be baptized therein may be thoroughly renewed, that he may put off the old man which is corrupt through deceitful lusts and put on the new man after the image of him that made him; that being planted in the likeness of his death by baptism, he may be partaker of his resurrection."

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Food and drink for the departed play their part in the rites for the dead, especially the grains of wheat which are now taken to symbolize the resurrection. But in the religious life of the people, Christianity has often had to come to terms with tough survivals among old pagan customs which it more or less disguises, particularly in the picturesque domestic ceremonies which often follow the more orthodox proceedings in Church. This is true not only of the rites which accompany death, but of many other observances also in the course of the year. They may not stand the test of rigid Orthodox belief, and the parish priest, who is perhaps better educated than the members of his flock, may frown upon them, but at least they have a humble part to play in reminding the peasant of the reality of the unseen world and that he is but a pilgrim in this. 765 775 [777]•

Pilgrimage too in the literal sense figures prominently in the religion of the people. The desire to go on pilgrimage is felt by every faithful Orthodox believer. It may be only to the neighbouring monastery or the shrine of a local saint. It may be much further afield, and happy is he who realizes the ideal of every devout pilgrim, and journeys to the Holy Land. But whether the goal be near or far, the pilgrim goes to confess his sins, to say his prayers and to eat, drink and be merry at some place where the unseen world has markedly broken through and made it holy. 788

III

ELEMENTS OF A FOLK-CHRISTIANITY
AND ITS RELATION TO MAGIC

Procopius in describing the manners of the Slavs has a 771●
 remark to this effect; that while they believed in a
 supreme God and in many spirits and demons and
 lesser gods, they neither believed in any fate, nor in any direct
 influences over human life of a supernatural nature. What
 the writer meant to convey by this extraordinary statement
 is not known, unless that at that time the ideas of pre-
 destination, the cult of fates, who regularly preside over
 births, and that of the ancestors, for whose service the most
 characteristic ceremonies of the peasant are designed, were
 not in evidence; or that in general the religious attitude of
 these barbarians differed essentially from that of the Greeks.
 Procopius goes on to say that, when a man felt himself to 174
 be in particular danger, through sickness or through war, he 175
 promised gifts to the gods, and, if the situation were grave 1782
 he made these in fact, hoping therewith to redeem his life.
 This is still a fundamental element of popular prophylaxis.
 Apart from such literary curiosities, the early religion of the
 South Slavs can only be reconstructed from later evidence,
 from recent folk-lore, and, in this case, not very helpful
 archaeological study.

For the more northern branches of the Slavic race, there 771
 is ample evidence of a pagan priesthood, of a shamanistic 175
 type, and of an organised cult, with a foundation of animistic
 magic, an established ritual, calendar and shrines. There is
 no conclusive record of anything approaching such a highly
 organised system amongst the South Slavs, and the traces
 of idol worship have received no concrete archaeological
 confirmation up to date. The fuller accounts of Helmoldus
 amongst the West Slavs, and of Nestor amongst the Russians,

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160 ELEMENTS OF A FOLK-CHRISTIANITY

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 ● 771 describe a number of local or tribal cults; nor is it justifiable
 175 to imagine a basis of a uniform primitive Slav system.

In the South, that is to say, in the Lower Danube basin and in Illyria, tradition ascribes the first conversions to Christianity to the time of Heraclius, and there seems not to have been the same fierce and prolonged opposition to the new cult, with which it had to contend in Russia and Northern Europe. In Russia and in Poland, a dual confession, and apparently a heathen priesthood, lasted into the later Middle Ages; in the eleventh to twelfth centuries attempts were made to re-establish the old faith on a national basis. True, the rising in Bulgaria against Boris (eleventh century) was led by an anti-Christian element, but we do not know of an active priesthood in this connection, nor whether it was a revival of Slavonic or Asperuh tendencies. Until the final establishment of a national, autonomous Church in Bulgaria, and in fact, until the turning-point of the Synod of Trnovo (seventeenth century), the indecision as to belief was evident not only in the varying allegiance to pope or patriarch, but in the activities of the numberless heretical sects, not merely tolerated, but at times enjoying considerable privileges and influence.

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 795 The presence of these sects, notably of a gnostic character,
 797 pre-dates the Orthodox missions of the tenth century, and caused their retreat from Pannonia. The earliest account of the Slav apostles mentions the 'thrice heathen heretics' who were unacquainted with Slavonic; probably referring to that mixture of Paulician and Eulite doctrine, which, since the fourth century, had spread into the Northern Balkans, and remains to this day among the Nazarenes of the trans-Danube. Syrian and Armenian colonies had been established in Thrace during the seventh century in the time of Constantine, still known to M. Psellos and Cedrenos as Massalians. Armenian Monophysites and Paulicians lived in the neighbourhood of Plovdiv, Sofia, Devol, Rila, Moglena, Kjustendil, etc., from the eleventh to the thirteenth century; the Drago-vilci being known in South-east Macedonia as extreme

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IV

SOURCES OF ANCIENT MAGIC
AND MEDICINE

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During the pagan and semi-pagan period the Slavs lived in small, independent tribes, later forming loose federations within territorial limits. For long the Greeks were unable to negotiate with them, because they did not agree among themselves and had no central authority. The organisation of a united state in Rascia coincided with the establishment of state Christianity, and the pagan empire of Bulgaria was comparatively short-lived.

The tribal religious cult was likely to have been an extension of a domestic cult, probably rarely accompanied by the specialised functions of an official priesthood. The domestic cult lasts to the present day. The head of the household officiates in ceremonial, and the assistance of an outsider is not essential. In ceremonial which involves the whole tribe or village, the heads of households—the tribal elders—are again responsible; but that they have not an entire monopoly of ritual is evident in ceremonies which are performed by a group without a specially chosen leader, particularly those which belong to the younger people, or ceremonies conducted by old women doctors, etc.¹

¹ The rites of the peasants hint also at an independent development. It is not true only that the non-Christian element enjoyed a revival, tended to revert to type, after the fall of the mediaeval empire. A direction was taken at that time, perhaps, in which the popular religion continued a course of development and adaptation. The popular religion, or sometimes a popular aversion to religion as well as to social forms that flourished under a feudal church, must have sought new outlets much earlier. Local forms of peasant cults must be of comparatively recent growth, and contain more than the survivals of an ancient paganism. The *slava*, for instance, is a typical example of a domestic rite which does not require a special priesthood. It has become perhaps the central

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935

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180 SOURCES OF ANCIENT MAGIC

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There is little trace of shamanism in the Balkans, and few instances of the combining of the functions of priest and doctor and magician except by accident. In peasant cults these offices are adopted to meet a special occasion, unless they are the speciality of a local wise woman. Women who have ceased to menstruate or widows may have to be chosen for certain rites, but this is only a temporary priesthood. The seeress mediates between ordinary people and spirits only when she is required to do so. Young men without physical defect only may be allowed to take part in certain ritual dances, etc. Almost each cult has its own 'priest'. The fulfilment of the village 'vows' and the sacrifice at the sacred village tree is performed by householders, and the high priest of the occasion is the host for that year. The mother of twins is, it is said, considered to be specially pure, and twins themselves have special occasional functions. I hazard that this arrangement is characteristic of peasant cults; and that the institution of a monopoly of priestcraft, whether on the part of the Christian church or by the priests of organised pagan cults, meant a profound social change, to uphold which popular custom had to be discredited.

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In Russia itself, so many parallels are found that a close

feature of the religious life of South Slav Orthodox communities and has died hard among the non-Orthodox. It represents an elaboration under peculiar circumstances of a strictly domestic cult with occasional ministrants, whose sporadic priestly duties are determined by their normal social function and status. A similar Lithuanian rite was also traditionally a strictly domestic affair. The *slava* embraces ideas and ceremonial found in the earliest accounts of Slav custom and which belonged to pre-Christian ideas, but other features, and the general form as we now know it, so closely resemble the celebration of the liturgy that the institution may well have arisen from an early practice of private celebrations, or imitations of the liturgy, perhaps at a time of a Christian minority, or further encouraged by the conditions of Turkish occupation. There is still a tendency to think that anything that is not traceable to the Churches' institutions is necessarily pre-Christian in origin. The cycle of Christmas rites also shows a mixture of sources and evidence of late formation, and considerable local variety when the cycle of the whole season, which may include rites transferred from other seasons, is considered. In any case, the past is not always 'fossilised'. While a

AND MEDICINE

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connection with Asiatic shamanism was suggested many years ago. On the whole, the characteristics of magical practice are better mapped regionally than ethnologically; the Russian and West Slavs falling beside the Baltic and Finnish races of the north; while Balkan Slav folk-lore more closely resembles that of the neighbouring southern races.

In the process of time a religious sentiment has grown up about the ritual inherited from ancient semi-magical rites; and direct magic, conceived as such, figures principally as a part of a medical system, in which, however, empiricism now predominates, and magic is applied rationalistically. This division between applied magic and religion, between charm worker and the priest, seems to have existed since early times.

The pagan cult, as far as can be judged, recognised innumerable local and tribal gods, associated with the various activities of the people, such as war, agriculture, etc., or representing personifications; and an equally important cult of trees, stones and waters, in which, according to some, gods or spirits were supposed to reign. The Slavs of the East could not swear by trees, fountains or stones (but the priests gave accused persons the choice of trial by ploughshare, iron or

custom can in any sense be said to live, though it come out of the past it is also a part of actuality and a factor of present-day life and psychology. The popular religion is more sophisticated, and probably greatly more varied than any reconstruction of primitive cults that could be made. It depends on the vigour of the church organisation locally how far a distinction is made between standard Christian practice and the rest, and how far the non-Christian part of tradition is looked upon as not wholly in conformity with the nominal faith. Left to itself the folk-mind blends diverse elements into a single law. Certainly custom, particularly religious custom, is not in origin a direct response to the physical environment. Adjustment to the demands of a ruling class, for instance, is not expressed only on the economic plane. But there is a tendency to try to adapt institutions—even those forced upon a community—to material circumstances. Hence the permeation of all peasant cults by the dominant interest in provision for life and the staying of disaster. The Church would have had little chance of survival here had its rites not received an economic and apotropaic interpretation, far removed from the spiritual benefits of its written doctrine.

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Historical Bulgaria EF2
Historical Yugoslavia EF2
Slavic Peoples EV6 ●

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lot). The sacred oak tree is mentioned by several early chroniclers. Now while the cult of vegetation, water spirits, and to some lesser extent of stones, in the Balkans at any rate, retains most of its primal character and importance, so that the sacrificing to trees, or on trees, for instance, can be found almost exactly as described by Herbord among the West Slavs and by Ibn Rosteh in Russia, that of patron deities, of an ancient Slavonic pantheon, does not remain at all. Not a single name of a Slavonic god has been recorded here beyond doubt; not a single image recovered.

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Taking all the evidence together, it is not impossible to conclude that the complex pantheism of the other Slavs which required an established priesthood, was not typical of the religion of the Southern Slavs; whereas in the north and west the priestly cult overshadowed older popular forms. Even there the cult of the sacred tree is spoken of as an ancient custom of the people, not one of the ministrations of the priests. The priests themselves delivered oracles as well as read omens; and besides carrying out performances within the shrine to which the populace was not admitted, or at which it assisted only as an audience, they took upon themselves to impersonate gods in order to mislead the ignorant. Literary sources in the Balkans have plentiful references to 'magicians', etc., but those to priests occur mainly in conventional accounts of paganism, except in the accounts of the Bulgars during the Asperuh period.

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The two chief offices of priesthood were sacrifice and divining, which could, in the north, elevate the priest to the position of tribal leader. For the Balkans we are told that the reading of omens accompanied blood sacrifice.

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The priests of the East and West Slavs were a caste apart, specially endowed and specially venerated. In the long list of terms connected with priestcraft and sorcery in early monuments, and in the vocabularies of modern languages, the titles of various kinds of priest and magician and

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appear that, for longer prayers, the priests and others who^S
recited them relied on their books. The early recording of¹⁸³
these forms partly accounts for their universal similarity.⁷⁸²
Doubtless, the sporadic work of copying began in the Balkans.⁷⁵³
The majority of early Russian and South Slav material⁷⁸⁹
of this order has a uniform character, not to be found in⁸
other departments of either folk-lore or popular literature.⁷⁵⁵
Still more significant is the fact that exorcismal forms and⁷⁸⁹
the magical prescriptions which are first found associated¹⁷⁴
with Orthodoxy, are not unknown in Catholic countries. As
regards magical spells, these are remarkably uniform. In the
Balkans, the oriental origins of the well-known legend
formulae are re-emphasised by direct contact at a later date
with Mohammedan culture. The gap between the Byzantine
or Christianised prototype of the charm and the popular
version might be explicable on these grounds.

III

The Orthodoxy of the Slavs gave early signs of extreme^{SP}
asceticism. In any case Christian culture, as such, offered⁷⁷¹
no new material basis of healing, but would have provided⁷⁵⁵
only approved forms of the visitation of the sick, the consol-
ation of prayer and sacrament.¹ Whatever the pre-Christian
system was, it was officially classed as heathen survival, and
it never dissociated itself entirely from its primitive con-
ceptions.

To summarise the results of research, the seers and priests^{SP}
of antiquity used strong-smelling herbs for internal and ex-⁷⁵⁵
ternal use; the bodies and products of animals, birds, reptiles²⁷⁸
and fishes; drugs and concoctions to induce sleep, intoxica-⁷⁷⁹
tion or abortion, stimulants and poisons. The uses of certain
minerals, and particularly of certain magical stones and a
few pigments, were certainly known. To these were added

¹ The functions of the Orthodox priest as healer and exorciser, the
use of holy water and oil, the laying-on of crosses, relics and books, etc.,
are epitomised in a note in Gear's *Enchiridion*, p. 750.

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present in these practices, I would also ask whether there were not some more tangible cult significance underlying this giving of new vitality to trees. But this possibility and, for the matter of that, this aspect of agricultural activity as a whole, does not seem to have found a commentator, and I myself have not yet sufficient instances to formulate a theory.

The respect for things in general is innate in the peasant, as countless small observances in everyday life show. So long as this recognition persists, any object, however mean and common, can on occasion serve in magic, without being sacred; while if on the basis of special 'taboos' a list of sacred plants and animals were made, it would be far too large to allow of so many special cults or cult usages. Much less extensive would be a corresponding list of cursed things, which cannot under any circumstances be touched.

It must be remembered that the inventory of a peasant household (of the kind still out of touch with urbanism) is not large, while in the mountains or in the hinterland of Dalmatia it may not include all the primary necessities even of a very simple life. In this simpler scheme domestic artifacts and utensils retain something of their primitive significance. In extreme cases domestic tidiness is a minor ritual; every object has its proper place when not in use, and is carefully handled, and put away in a special position, which must not be reversed. The broom, the sieve, the kneading trough, the scoop, the chains of the hearth pot, the gourd, etc., have had their ritual associations amongst every people.

It is not possible to disentangle knowledge of the physical properties of substances from their significance in legend or worship; and it would be equally impossible to trace whether an object, used in divination, or a household utensil, which seems to enjoy special respect, such as a sieve or a wood-block or an axe, has a certain power ascribed to it directly, or through an analogous association with some other category of ideas.

The steam bath is noticed early for East and Northern Slavs, but it is curious that after the Slav invasion, the

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had been stoned to death "many, many years ago." He never failed to add at least half a dozen stones and a multitude of curses to any heap we passed by the way. ^{M 754}

Vuk Vrchevitch, in his book on old customs at minor religious festivals, collected in the Bocche di Cattaro, Montenegro, and the Herzegovina, mentions in a footnote that it was customary in the middle of the nineteenth century in Montenegro, when "a man made a statement and at once recognized he had made a mistake, to strike it on a stone (u kamen udariti). He scratched a stone with the nails of his right hand to transfer the error to the stone." As the author thought it necessary to explain this custom to Serbian readers, it is clear that the custom was a local one. ^{M 789}

It is noteworthy that I can find no reference to swearing upon stones in old Serbian ballads, though swearing enough takes place in them. ^{5b 626 783}

That it is a custom of extreme antiquity there can be no doubt.

Lavrov (v. Jirecek) states that the Macedonian Slavs of old worshipped trees and stones. But tree- and pillar-worship is common to very many lands and existed in the Balkans long before the advent of the Slavs. Sir Arthur Evans describes the cult at Mycenae and Dodona (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi). The oath on the stone may, therefore, belong to all and any of the Balkan people. ^{SP 771 783 627}

The Northern Slavs appear to have had some such oath. Helmoldus, in his *Chronica Slavorum* (c. 1160), tells that they "showed great reverence to their holy places, which were frequently sacred groves or springs, and would not lightly take an oath there, lest they should be overtaken by the wrath of the avenging god." When the church at Oldenburg was built and dedicated to St. John the Baptist in 1066 by the Saxons, "the Count bade the Slavs gather in the church to hear the Word of God . . . and the Slavs were restrained in future from swearing by trees, fountains, and stones; they were to bring those accused of crimes to the priest to be examined by the iron or the ploughshare" (c. 83). The steps taken by various races to "civilize" others are very interesting. Here the Saxons evidently consider the practice of ordeal by hot iron a more Christian method than that of swearing innocence upon an object believed to be sacred by the swearer.

Helmoldus's statement shows that this ordeal was not Slavonic. We must, therefore, suppose that the hot-iron ordeal, recommended in Stefan Dushan's Code (1349) as a means of testing serfs accused of crime, was borrowed from a neighbour land. Be this as it may, the ordeal was in use in South Slav districts till well into the nineteenth century.

Swearing on a stone has survived only in Albania as a means of self-justification; and it is not impossible that it has existed from ^{A 713 627}